

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL

AMES, IOWA

AUGUST 16, 2016

The Ames City Council met in special session at 6:00 p.m. on the 16th day of August 2016, in the City Council Chambers in City Hall, 515 Clark Avenue, pursuant to law with Mayor Ann Campbell presiding and the following Council members present: Gloria Betcher, Tim Gartin, Peter Orazem, Chris Nelson, and Bronwyn Beatty-Hansen. Council Member Corrieri was brought in telephonically. *Ex officio* Member Sam Schulte was absent.

Also present were President and CEO Louie Laurent of ZLR Ignition, Senior VP Creative Bob Delsol of ZLR Ignition, and Senior Manager of Research Strategy Linda Kuster of Vernon Research Group.

Louie Laurent introduced the presentation on the Millennial Marketing Campaign Concept and gave a brief overview of the City Council Ignition Day, an in-depth conversation aimed at defining objectives and identifying challenges and opportunities as a team.

Linda Kuster discussed the types of qualitative research performed which consisted of individual in-depth interviews and two focus groups. Participants included community leaders in both private and public sectors and millennial residents of Ames, Des Moines and surrounding suburbs. It was said that some participants were chosen by the City and others were recruited by a screener. Additional requirements consisted of being a young couple or family choosing to live in Ames, some of which were ISU alumni.

Overall key findings depicted Ames as a very safe community with good schools and superior parks and trails, but with room for improvement in terms of retail options, housing prices and availability, and the availability of affordable childcare.

Council Member Orazem asked if similar results would be found if conducting the same research for Cedar Falls or Iowa City. Kuster stated that Iowa City showcases the University as part of their image and speculated that housing around Iowa City, especially North Liberty, is more available and affordable while still being in the school district.

Council Member Corrieri left the meeting at 6:42 p.m. The workshop recessed at 6:42 p.m. and reconvened at 6:47 p.m.

Council Member Betcher wanted to clarify how the words “progressive” and “conservative” were used when discussing the key findings from the focus groups. Kuster said it depended on the specific question, but was mostly referring to the speed of adopting change and moving forward.

Laurent suggested more photos of Ames residents, street fairs, dining and social activities be shown through social media to attract millennials. Collaborating with businesses would also increase the awareness of amenities.

Bob Delsol read a manifesto intended to emotionalize the campaign. The wording and tone came from the millennials who were asked why they like Ames. Delsol suggested creating billboards

and street banners to visually excite people coming into Ames, as well as web banners to show what Ames has to offer.

Council Member Gartin asked to what degree the City should include ISU in the campaign. Delsol recommended including the university if it plays a role in the story being told such as with entertainment and depicting a growing community, but it would not be necessary when showcasing amenities such as Main Street or the parks and trails. He stated that millennials do not want to relive college; they want to see the lifestyle afterwards.

City Manager Schainker asked how this campaign ties into the Smart Choice campaign. Gwiasda stated that this is under the umbrella of Smart Choice; it is just directed towards a specific market.

Council Member Orazem asked if the City would work with the school district in this campaign. Gwiasda stated that if Council is interested in this campaign, conversations would take place about the process of including them in the appropriate areas. Since this campaign is targeting a specific group, collaboration is needed to be successful.

Council Member Gartin asked how the success of the campaign would be measured. Laurent stated there would be changes in census and housing sales, and quantitative studies and surveys would provide additional information.

Mayor Campbell was concerned that the campaign will attract a certain type of millennial, one who can afford the current housing situation, yet change the demographic of Ames. It was restated that affordable housing would need to be developed to attract all types of millennials.

Council Member Betcher asked how Ames would overcome the towns that seem to be a bit more enticing with more affordable housing and amenities. Laurent stated that change will not be seen early in the campaign, but without a vision, the community will age. The campaign will advance the City in the long-term by building a desire to live in Ames. He believes that additional housing would be needed to have the campaign be successful. In response, Betcher stated it might be more successful to postpone the campaign until the housing issue is addressed and it is determined what has to be done in the short-term.

Moved by Gartin to direct staff to put together a plan to take the next steps in this campaign with considering the budget, seconded by Orazem. Vote on Motion: 4-1. Voting aye: Nelson, Beatty-Hansen, Orazem, Gartin. Voting nay: Betcher. Motion declared carried.

SECOND READING OF ORDINANCE TO ALLOW CLUBHOUSES IN THE FS-RM ZONING DISTRICT: Moved by Nelson, seconded by Beatty-Hansen, to pass on second reading an ordinance allowing clubhouses in the FS-RM Zoning District.

Roll Call Vote: 5-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

The workshop recessed at 8:00 p.m. and reconvened at 8:09 p.m.

Planning and Housing Director Kelly Diekmann and Assistant Planner Justin Moore introduced the workshop on Landscape Ordinance and mentioned that Confluence, a landscape architect consultant from Des Moines, was hired on the project. The point based scoring system consisting

of six separate categories was discussed. Developers would need to achieve a minimum scoring per mandatory category and an overall point total. Large sites would require 50 points and small sites would require 33 points. The categories were:

Soil Management Plan- Minimum score of 8 points for all size sites

Environmental Design- Minimum score of 8 points for large sites, 6 points for small sites

Front Yard Landscaping & Parking Lot Screening- Minimum of 10 points for large sites, 8 points for small sites

Planting Design- Minimum of 8 points for large sites, 4 points for small sites

Groundcover- Minimum of 10 points for large sites, 7 points for small sites

Site Amenities “Bonus Category”- No required minimum score, 8 additional bonus points

Council Member Beatty-Hansen asked how the minimums were established in each category. Diekmann stated that they mostly came from Confluence and what staff considered most important. They looked at different ways to reach the total amount and tried several weights in each category.

Council Member Gartin asked what happens if the vegetation dies that the site owner was originally awarded points on. Diekmann said there would be some sort of an enforcement process and the City could determine if they are compliant or not. The site owner would have to replant if necessary. Meeting soil requirements would prolong the life of vegetation.

Council Member Betcher asked how the number of grasses, shrubs, and trees were determined in the requirements. Diekmann stated that they came from the Confluence consultants. In some ways, site owners would get credit for already existing trees. Points are awarded for large trees and retaining vegetation. It was said that awarding points could overlap within categories, specifically within tree requirements.

Key findings showed that adding diversity is not difficult, but the process is easier with initial integration. Currently, most commercial and industrial sites are not compliant with the new plan and they will have to be dealt with on a case by case basis. Also, Campustown and Downtown would need special consideration.

PUBLIC FORUM: Justin Dodge, Hunziker, stated that when testing the process and working with a landscape architect to make a site aesthetically pleasing at first, they did not meet those requirements. In order to achieve the required points, a developer would have to know the point system prior to meeting with landscape architects. He believes that having to meet the minimum points required for each category is difficult. Also, with significantly more expenses put towards improvements, they still did not meet all requirements.

Josh Shields, Bolton & Menk, said when researching specific sites to see if requirements were met, most sites failed. He believes developers would have to be aware of the point system initially in order to meet requirements, and even so, it would be difficult for specific large sites.

Scott Renaud, Fox Engineering, stated that he was not in favor of the point system. After looking at each category, he was able to sense what would be easily achievable and what would not.

He also mentioned that site owners would not get credit for street trees.

COMMENTS:

Council Member Orazem asked about the importance of the minimum point requirements. Diekmann stated that staff is working on the perfect point system and what would be achievable. He questioned if minimum points or total points are more important and stated that achieving the total points would ensure a thoughtful design.

Moved by Gartin to direct staff to continue to further develop the point system, seconded by Orazem. 5-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

Council Member Nelson said that dealing with existing sites will be a big deal and cost will definitely play a major role. The requirements for larger sites and apartments will be much more costly than that of a smaller site such as a restaurant.

Council Member Betcher expressed her concerned of sending a consistent message of what is valued, an example being whether or not storm water design is more valuable than hardscape design. Betcher also wondered if site owners could have the possibility of paying the City in lieu of meeting certain requirements. She suggested the funds could be used to assist with other City landscaping.

ADJOURNMENT: Moved by Gartin to adjourn the meeting at 10:22 p.m.

Diane R. Voss, City Clerk

Ann H. Campbell, Mayor

Heidi Petersen, Recording Secretary